

Application No. 10/508,880

Reply to Office Action

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed and considered the Final Office Action dated August 8, 2007, the Advisory Action dated December 12, 2007 and the references cited therein. Applicant has amended claim 14 to improve its form and to distinguish even more clearly over the prior art. Applicant believes the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration in light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 14-22 and 27-28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious in view of Fonseca (U.S. Patent 6,660,950) in view of Barton (U.S. Patent 6,501,195). Claims 23-26 have been indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 14 as amended is not taught or suggested by Fonseca and Barton either singly or in combination.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner notes that "the Barton reference is relied upon for showing a connect/disconnect system based on the presence/absence of power." The Examiner further explains that Barton "detects the presence and absence of power supply and thus provides power or cuts power to a device...." Applicant respectfully submits that this characterization of the teachings of Barton is not entirely accurate. The power supply to which the Barton device is connected is the regular 120 VAC line voltage. Barton does not provide or cut power to the peripheral devices based on the presence or absence of this power supply. This power supply is always present. Barton provides or cuts power to the peripheral devices based on sensing whether the main device is turned on or turned off. The power to the peripheral devices is the line voltage, not a supply voltage *provided by the computer for powering peripheral devices* as called for in amended claim 14.

The Office Action acknowledges that Fonseca does not operate on the basis of the presence or absence of a supply voltage, let alone a computer supply voltage for powering a peripheral device. Thus, even if Fonseca and Barton were properly combinable, the combined device would still lack the claimed control connector for connecting to and receiving a supply voltage provided by the computer for powering peripheral devices. As noted, Barton is connected to a line voltage and does not connect to or receive a line voltage provided by the computer. Fonseca likewise does not teach or suggest the claimed control

Application No. 10/508,880

Reply to Office Action

connector. Fonseca suggests that its data line switch could be operated automatically, but offers little details as to how this could be accomplished. Moreover, neither Barton nor Fonseca teach the further limitation of the control connector that it be operable to bring the switching device into the first switching state when the computer supply voltage is present and to bring the switching device into the second state when the computer supply voltage is absent.

In the original response to the Final Office Action filed by applicant November 8, 2007, applicant raised an argument that Fonseca and Barton as combined would not be operable to break the data connection to the PC when the computer supply voltage was absent. Fonseca teaches that its automatic operation is achieved through the use of a motor 2022 (see Fig. 20) which switches Fonseca into the disconnect mode. This motor 2022 relies upon the computer for power and control instructions. If the computer is shut down, the power supply and related control software for the motor 2022 that is provided by the computer disappears rendering the motor 2022 inoperable and as a result unable to switch the Fonseca/Barton combined device into the disconnect mode. Barton does not address this deficiency in the design of Fonseca in that it, as noted above, is designed to operate while attached to a line voltage that is always present.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner responded that Fig. 20 of Fonseca was not relied upon for the rejection. If not, then it is unclear what the basis is for saying Fonseca teaches automatic operation. The Examiner further explained that the Fonseca system will automatically disconnect when no power is provided because a solenoid is present. Applicant requests clarification of this point as it is unclear what is being relied upon for support. Namely, it is unclear whether the support for the point is in Fonseca itself or elsewhere. To the extent Fonseca discloses the use of a solenoid, it presumably would work the same as the motor 2022 and thus would be inoperable when the computer was shut down. Applicant respectfully submits that Fonseca's disclosure is non-enabling with respect to any other configuration for the solenoid.

For the foregoing reasons, claim 14 as amended is allowable over Fonseca and Barton. The claims depending from claim 14 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 14.

Application No. 10/508,880

Reply to Office Action

Applicants respectfully submit that the patent application is in condition for allowance. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of the subject application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,


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